Fomrhi Comm. 2125   **Luke Emmet**
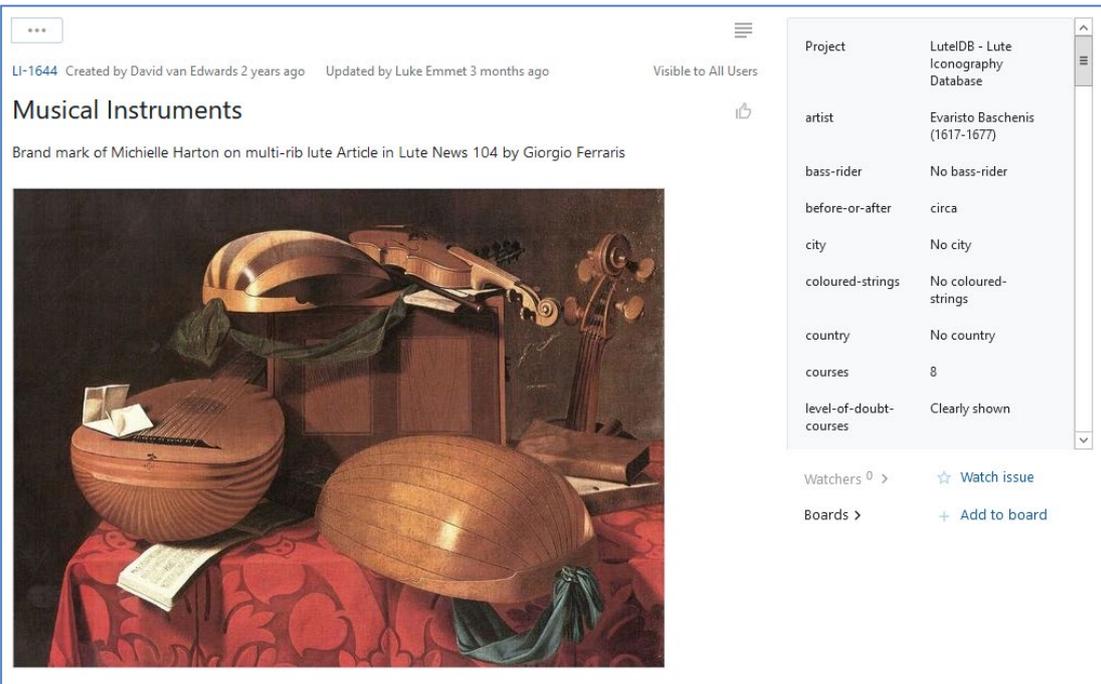
An Online Instrument Iconography Database - built for lute enthusiasts, but of wider interest

Members of the UK Lute Society are probably familiar with the *Lute Iconography database*, based on work by David Van Edwards on the available lute iconography, drawn up over a number of decades and recently made available online. This classifies a great deal of the extant lute iconography and provides much useful information for lute makers, players and scholars. Over 2200 images are currently classified. A more in depth summary is provided on the Lute Society's website:

https://www.lutesociety.org/pages/lute-iconography-database

and the live database itself is at:

https://lute-images.myjetbrains.com/youtrack/issues/LI

Most of the fields in the database are designed to characterise the lute family instruments that can be seen in each image, and includes a fair amount of organological information about the design, and construction that can be seen in the attached image, such as:

- Type of lute
- String layout
- Number of courses
- Strings and pegs
- Apparent timbers used
- Pegbox design

This site is clearly a very useful resource for anyone interested in the lute iconography - every image depicts a lute or lute family instrument across its golden age.
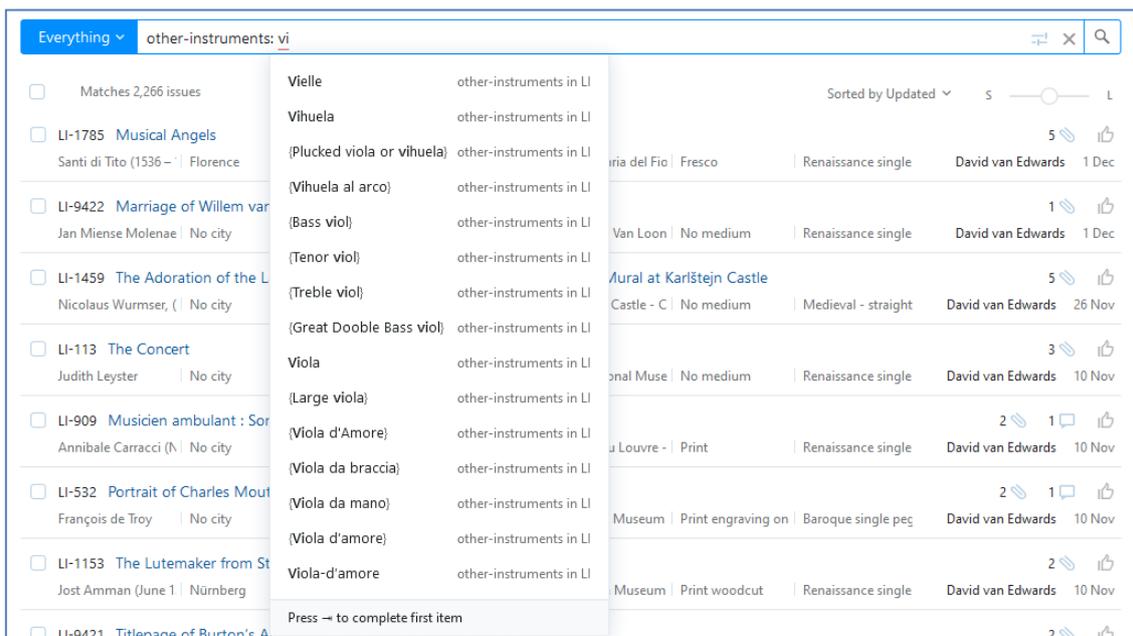
However, more widely, this resource may well be of wider interest for other historical instrument researchers and makers. For example of the 2200 images held, about 50% of these depict other instruments, and there is a specific field to capture this information. These other instruments are often depicted in the musical scenes alongside the lute. Other information about the type of scene (dancing, vanitas, still life) is also encoded which may provide important context.

Finally general information about the image is captured such as dates, location where created, artist, current location and medium.

You can search all the fields of the database using the search box at the top of each page. To search for these other instruments, one way is to search the "other-instruments" field using the following syntax:

other-instruments: {instrument name}
e.g. other-instruments: {Viola d'Amore}

As you type your search a list of possible matches are shown

Each search makes its own unique URL. For example here is a link to 141 depictions of Vielles

https://lute-images.myjetbrains.com/youtrack/issues?q=other-instruments:%20Vielle%20

There is more help and guidance on using the database from the Lute Society's page summary page.

I hope you can find some useful images in there – maybe you will discover something you have not yet seen.

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